

Appln No. 10/072,807

Amdt date June 2, 2004

Reply to Office action of December 2, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application, of which claims 1, 6, 15 and 17 are independent. Claims 7, 14 and 15 have been amended. Claims 16 and 17 have been added. The amendments and new claims add no new matter and find full support in the application as originally filed. In view of the above amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and a timely indication of allowance.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as allegedly being an improper dependent claim for having a preamble that is directed to an invention different from that in claim 1. Claim 14 has been amended to obviate this rejection.

The Examiner has also rejected claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for allegedly being indefinite for lacking antecedent basis for "support arm" and for allegedly being incomplete for not claiming an actuator to carry and move the support arm. The Examiner further contends that any amendment to overcome these 112 rejections would render 6 and 15 identical. Claim 15 has been amended at lines 6 and 7 to recite "a manipulator comprising a support arm movable by an actuator." Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment obviates the Examiner's rejections and provides claim 15 with a different scope of protection than claim 6. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 be withdrawn.

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Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited prior art, alone or in combination, teach or suggest the limitation of "moving the gripper of the manipulator above the positioning tool; actuating the gripper of the manipulator to pick up the at least one part in said positioning tool; horizontally pivoting the support arm over a limited angular range; displacing the support arm vertically without a change to its angular orientation to move the gripper of the manipulator above the positioning receptacle carried by the immobilized pallet; actuating the gripper of the manipulator to deposit the at least one part in said positioning receptacle; and moving the gripper again above the positioning tool for a fresh sequence of operations" in claim 15, which is also included in allowed claim 6. Therefore, allowance of claim 15 is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Office action of May 15, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for the reasons set forth on pages 2 and 3 in paragraphs 1-3, 5, 6 and 8. In a response filed on November 13, 2003, the Applicant responded to each of these rejections. However, in the current Office action the Examiner has made no reference to the Applicant's amendments and arguments filed on November 13, 2003.

Instead, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-5, 7/5 and 8-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) for the reasons set forth in the current Office action on pages 2-3 in paragraphs 1-3, 5, 6 and 8, which are verbatim to the rejections set for on pages 2-3 in paragraphs 1-3, 5, 6 and 8 from the Office action of May 15, 2003 (with the minor exception that what is referred to as claim

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7 in paragraph 3 of the Office action of May 15, 2003 is referred to as claim 7/5 in paragraph 3 of the current Office action.)

Applicant respectfully requests that either the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn or for the Examiner to address Applicant's arguments in the Amendment of November 13, 2003 and to give reasons as to why the arguments made in response to the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) from the Office action of May 15, 2003 are not persuasive.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has stated that claims 6 and 7/6 are allowed. Claim 7 has been amended to depend only from claim 6, rather than claims 5 and 6. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 6 and 7 remain in condition for allowance.

New Claims

New claims 16 and 17 have been added. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is in condition for allowance for the reasons given in Applicant response of November 13, 2003. Claim 16 depends from claim 1 and claim 17 includes each of the limitations of claim 1 as well as additional limitations. Accordingly claims 16 and 17 are also in condition for allowance, as including all of the limitations of claim 1 and for the additional limitations they include therein.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-17 are in condition for allowance, and a timely indication of allowance is respectfully

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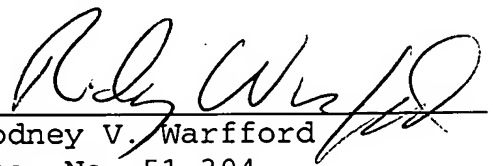
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requested. If there are any remaining issues that can be addressed by telephone, Applicant invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the number indicated.

Respectfully submitted,

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